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Government
Publications

ONTARIO COUNCIL ON UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS

OPEN MEETING WITH THE COUNCIL OF ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES

MAY 10, 1975

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ONTARIO COUNCIL ON UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS

MINUTES

MEETING

OPEN MEETING WITH THE COUNCIL OF ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES

| | | |
|--------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 5-0125 | <u>LOCATION</u> | <u>DATE AND TIME</u> |
| | Queen's Park, Toronto | May 10, 1975 9:15 a.m. |

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|--------|-------------------|
| 5-0126 | <u>ATTENDANCE</u> |
|--------|-------------------|

OCUA MEMBERS

J. S. Dupré

W. E. Bagnall

L. Good

M. A. B. Bush

W. A. Goyan

J. J. Deutsch

A. L. McCallion

A. D'Iorio

R. P. Riggin

P. D. Fleck

H. H. Walker

J. D. Fisher

J. R. Yarnell

OCUA STAFF

J. P. Venton
Executive Secretary

N. E. Simmons
Associate Secretary

MCU (Observers)

B. A. Wilson
Assistant Deputy Minister

J. C. Yen
University Relations
Co-ordinator

COU DELEGATION

A. J. Earp
G. V. Kidson

M. K. Oliver
D. K. Dale

W. C. Winegard
R. C. Anderson

G. H. Thompson

E. J. Monahan
D. A. B. Pearson

A. N. Bourns
P. L. Newbigging

R. Guindon
C. Lemyre

J. R. Evans
W. Dunphy

B. C. Matthews
D. Irish

N. H. Tayler
J. Weir

W. D. Farr

M. A. Preston

R. L. Watts
R. D. Fraser

T. E. W. Nind
S. F. Gallagher

D. C. Williams
R. G. Kidd

J. F. Leddy
C. MacInnis

J. B. Macdonald
G. G. Clarke

C. M. Carmichael
F. Ireland

5-0127

INTRODUCTION

Members of COU reviewed material previously circulated and commented on the status of each document. Discussion focused on the following:

5-0128

FORMULA REVISION

It was noted that the (Guindon) Green Paper from the Special Committee to Assess University Policies and Plans emphasized that the current high quality of Ontario universities was a result of the calibre of faculty and staff and cautioned against the danger of allowing standards to diminish.

The primary purpose of this model was to link the criteria for funding to base costs and to de-emphasize growth in a financially stringent situation. The delegation emphasized that the current operating grants formula would be adequate as long as yearly BIU value increases were sufficient. The Green Paper model had been designed for a situation where BIU value increases were inadequate.

It was noted that the Green Paper recommendation for formula revision hinged in part on an early announcement of the level of support. It was also pointed out that a major argument against adoption of a revised formula for 1975-76 had been the problem of retroactivity insofar as the method of funding could be considered to have some impact on admissions practises. The COU delegation agreed that the problem of retroactivity would be defused if the Minister were to advise the universities, in the near future, that the possibility existed that the formula could be modified to make it less sensitive to enrolment in 1976-77.

With regard to COU's request for an early announcement of funding levels, OCUA members noted that a primary objective of Government policy in budgeting was to change the rate of inflation, an objective

which could not be achieved through basing future budgets on past inflationary trends. Hence, it could be considered in the best interests of the university system, in the current unstable economic climate, to delay as long as possible the announcement of levels of support in order that they might more closely correspond to prevailing economic indicators.

5-0129

ENROLMENT

The repeated inconsistency between forecast and actual enrolment over the past few years was noted. The COU delegation explained that universities were in a dilemma of having to impose a growing number of ceilings on enrolment in the face of public pressure for accessibility. It was suggested that it would be an opportune time for the Government to publicly direct universities to curtail growth, if indeed that was Government's intention, through which action public pressure on the universities would be reduced.

The delegation pointed out that no definitive survey had been undertaken to ascertain the extent of unfilled capacity in the system. Although it was felt that growth in interdisciplinary interest was such that the universities would have difficulty analyzing capacity on a programme by programme basis, universities would be able next year through the use of very broad categories (such as marginal cost) to provide estimates of the amount of growth that could be accommodated to fill capacity.

5-0130

SALARIES

The delegation noted the universities' attempts to maintain internal rank/salary equity. However, it was felt that staff and faculty should not, through inappropriately low salary levels, subsidize universities especially those for whom employment opportunities do not exist in other sectors. Despite the financial situation, it was considered undesirable to take the next logical step namely to release staff and

faculty, especially since this pattern had not been followed in the public service or in other publicly funded sectors.

5-0131

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

It was generally agreed that universities would in the near future need to secure favourable public opinion in order to gain a higher priority for Government funding. Points suggested for stress in this exercise included the proportionately lower levels of support awarded to universities comparative to other provincially-funded educational sectors, and the implications to quality maintenance in the university system should the present funding trend be allowed to continue. As well it was pointed out that COU had been discussing ways to improve public awareness of issues confronting the universities.

5-0132

GRADUATE STUDIES

COU's brief describing the reorganization of planning and coordination of graduate studies had been prepared to:

1. inform OCUA of the new arrangements
2. demonstrate that COU's efforts in this regard were resulting in rationalization of graduate studies
3. urge OCUA to deal with ACAP at a general rather than detailed level
4. demonstrate the urgent need for OCUA to recommend removal of embargoes on programmes for which assessments had been completed.

With regard to 4. above the delegation stressed that a number of programmes were in a state of readiness to proceed but were awaiting removal of embargoes. It was felt that any further delay in lifting embargoes could be interpreted as a retroactive procedural change.

The delegation also drew attention to the misconception that in Ontario graduate growth over recent years had been untraditionally high. It was indeed argued that graduate enrolment vis a vis total university enrolment had remained proportionately constant. COU had requested

that OCGS determine whether the size of the graduate effort in the system as a whole was appropriate.

Members of OCUA raised questions of how coordination and rationalization of graduate programmes in the system could be continued without overly diminishing university operating resources, and how the future quality, credibility, and rationality of graduate programmes could be ensured.

The delegation felt that potential difficulties of reassessment would be ameliorated through annual university reports concerning compliance with the COU recommendations. Financial stringency would encourage universities to begin narrowing their individual fields of endeavour in graduate studies and, as a result of this combined with interim background material, future reassessments would need not be as intensive and costly. Reference was also made to an interim amendment process for discipline plans through which such plans would remain dynamic. As a result of this provision up-to-date plans would be in existence at the time of any discipline reassessment.

Future quality was felt to be provided for through the requirement that discipline groups report annually on the health of the disciplines. Insofar as public credibility was concerned, the delegation pointed out that assessment reports, including full consultants' reports were considered public documents, and that to date there had been no evidence of lay public concern in this area.

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N. E. Simmons
Associate Secretary

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J. S. Dupré
Chairman

